

# Exhibit 56



## Permanent Observer Mission of The State of Palestine to the United Nations New York

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### Statement by H.E. Minister Riyad Mansour, Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations, before the United Nations Security Council, Open Debate on the Situation in the Middle East, including the Palestine Question, 21 July 2020

21 JULY 2020 BY PALESTINE AT THE UN

Mr. President,

We appreciate your presence among us today, which highlights the importance of the matter at hand especially at this critical juncture. We also express our appreciation as to Mr. Mladenov and to the briefers, Mr. Shikaki and Mr. Levy, for their important presentations.

Mr. President,

As we celebrate Nelson Mandela Day, we must honor, through action, the struggle Mandela dedicated his life to. As highlighted in the important vision presented by the Secretary-General in his statement on this occasion, Mandela devoted his life to fighting inequality and injustice, regardless of its sources, and in solidarity with all its victims.

This included solidarity with the Palestinian people, with Mandela stressing *"We know too well our freedom is incomplete without the freedom of the Palestinians"*. There is a reason why those who have fought against colonialism and Apartheid remain the strongest advocates of the Palestinian cause. They recognize the similarity of our chains, but also our common aspiration to freedom, and we are proud to have them by our side in our ongoing just struggle.

Mr. President,

In times of war and times of peace, Israel has relentlessly entrenched its control over Palestinian land and Palestinian lives. Immediately after the start of the 1967 occupation, it initiated its first illegal settlements. In 1980, even as it concluded a peace agreement with Egypt, it unlawfully annexed Jerusalem. In 1993, as we concluded the Oslo Accords, it decided to speed up its settlement activities, with the number of settlers now being 7-fold what they were at the time. During the 2<sup>nd</sup> Intifada, it built a wall to cement its *de facto* annexation, as pronounced by the ICJ.

Regardless of what the Palestinian people did, and of what the international

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Regardless of what the Palestinian people did, and of what the international community said, Israel never changed course. Whether there were negotiations or not, violence or not, international efforts or not, it pressed on, and impunity from accountability under the law guaranteed that the benefits of occupation would far outweigh its cost. Its strategic objective has never changed: grabbing maximum Palestinian geography with minimum Palestinian demography.

In a week from now, we will commemorate 40 years since the unlawful annexation of East Jerusalem. Since then, Israel has launched a full-fledged war against Palestinian presence in the City. It is a cold-blooded and systematic endeavor through a well-oiled machinery of illegal laws, policies and practices. Discriminatory zoning and planning has isolated Palestinians within 13% of their own City, the area of East Jerusalem already built-up in 1967. The occupying Power has created a coercive environment with constant home demolitions, revocation of residency cards, preventing family reunification, all designed to achieve the forcible transfer of Palestinians. It has closed down Palestinian institutions, continues preventing elections and regularly arresting the Palestinian Governor of Jerusalem. Its settlers have besieged the City from inside out. It is a slow, silent and yet violent process of dispossession and annexation.

Since then, Israel has not declared its annexation of any other part of the Occupied Palestinian Territory. It feared the consequences of such action, especially given the strong international reaction to its decision, including by this Security Council, as witnessed in 1980 and again in 2017. It kept waiting for a crack in the international system to formalize what it had illegally advanced on the ground. It finally thought it had reached this long-awaited moment, where it could reveal its true and not so well-hidden intentions.

However, something happened in these last few weeks that, if furthered, may allow us to shift course towards peace. The firm positions expressed by so many governments, including Security Council members at Ministerial level, intergovernmental organizations, including the Arab League, EU, NAM, OIC, parliamentarians, civil society actors, legal scholars, independent human rights experts, the Elders, women leaders and peoples of conscience worldwide demonstrated the global commitment to justice and international law and human rights. It is a formidable international front against annexation and occupation and for peace that must be sustained.

Stopping annexation is a critical battle that we must win, but we should not forget the war that Israel has been waging for decades. Israel may abandon declaring *de jure* annexation, but it will not abandon its annexation plans. They are being implemented as we speak, one military order at a time, one demolished house at a time, one confiscated parcel of land at a time, one Palestinian family displaced at a time, one settlement unit at a time.

The Prime Minister, the soldier, the settler, the bureaucrat, the parliamentarian, the judge in the military court, they all conspire towards that objective Israel has pursued obsessively: grabbing maximum Palestinian geography with minimum Palestinian demography.

The world cannot unsee what Israel has so starkly revealed. It has no intention whatsoever to end its 53-year occupation and make peace. Israel wants its illegality to be considered an irreversible reality, asking for recognition instead of displaying contrition. We tell Israel: what is irreversible, as Mandela said, is our march to freedom.

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A people that has been uprooted from their homeland, dispossessed, exiled, occupied, colonized, annexed and deprived of their fundamental human rights cannot continue to be blamed for their plight and inability to bring an end to it, while they continue, against all odds, to seek a solution through the most peaceful, legitimate means, until now to no avail.

The South African Nobel Peace Laureate Chief Lutuli declared *"Who will deny that thirty years of my life have been spent knocking in vain, patiently, moderately, and modestly at a closed and barred door? What have been the fruits of moderation? The past thirty years have seen the greatest number of laws restricting our rights and progress, until today we have reached a stage where we have almost no rights at all"*.

We could, 27 years since the signing of the Oslo Accords, almost repeat what he said word by word. But we believe that the international community can and must reward moderation and sanction extremism before it is too late.

Mr. President,

Who are the rejectionists? Those adhering to UN Security Council resolutions or those violating them? Those accepting the two-State solution on the pre-1967 borders or those destroying it? Those calling for international involvement, including through the Quartet and other multilateral efforts, to foster peace and hold the parties accountable, or those who seek endless "talks" with no results? Those who have presented maps and clear positions on all final status issues or those fleeing and violating any commitment?

Who are the delusional ones? Those seeking just and lasting peace that ensures the rights, dignity and security of all, or those who believe that Palestinians must accept, after a century of struggle for freedom, to live in Bantustans and surrender to perpetual injustice? Those who pursue an end of occupation to allow for peaceful and normal relations in the region, or those who believe it is possible to achieve acceptance by the region and security while denying the rights of an entire nation and undermining regional peace and security? Those advocating respect for international law and UN resolutions, or those who use religious extremism, supremacist theories, and unhinged nationalism to justify violating them.

Mandela's legacy is under threat in many parts of our world, and nowhere is this more true than in Palestine. 40 years ago, this Council stated, after the annexation of Jerusalem, its determination to examine practical ways and means, in accordance with the Charter, to secure the full implementation of its resolutions, in the event of non-compliance by Israel. Time for action by all is long overdue, and indispensable to ensure the triumph of freedom and dignity, justice and peace.

The law matters. Principles matter. Accountability matters. This is the lifeblood of the international community and the basis for peaceful relations and stability and security worldwide. Palestine is no exception.

I thank you, Mr. President.



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